

**From:** [Zehner, Warren](#)  
**To:** [Smith, Monica](#)  
**Cc:** [Enders, Jhana](#); [Petersen, Chris](#); [Crossland, Ronnie](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT  
**Date:** Monday, March 09, 2015 4:15:33 PM

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The following are my understanding of the situation

1. MTBE is water soluble, depending on the amount of the spill, is it on-going or not, in short not much can be done that I know of for recovery.
2. Flammability is and can be an issue, threat should be pretty low to very low based on current weather conditions (rain for next several hours) and the spill is on the water.
3. Yes, it does have a low odor threshold and it will stink. Is that an issue in residential areas right now, unknown. I would guess that it is pretty low due to weather conditions.
4. Spill is in USCG AOR and they have at least one, if not two RP(s) vessel owners on the hook for the response. USCG will be very aggressive with getting this cleaned up to get the Ship Channel opened. Millions of dollars are lost daily when the Channel is closed.

Response recommendations:

1. Coordinate with USCG unified command as necessary
2. Check with Water folks about any drinking or industrial inlets, and any recommendations they have that can be forwarded to USCG UC
3. ASPECT is probably best way to contribute to response, but they cannot fly today due to weather, maybe do an overflight tomorrow if USCG thinks of value.
4. Not much fishing or shell fish harvesting in this area, State is usually the lead on this. USCG learned a lot on this from Texas City Y.
5. Not much else can be done, in my opinion, because of weather and the spill being on water.

Warren

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**From:** Smith, Monica  
**Sent:** Monday, March 09, 2015 3:55 PM  
**To:** Zehner, Warren  
**Cc:** Enders, Jhana; Petersen, Chris; Crossland, Ronnie  
**Subject:** Fwd: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT

Warren seeing that you were telling me quite a bit about MTBE, please work with Jhana on developing responses associated w MTBE.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Crossland, Ronnie" <[Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov](mailto:Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov)>  
**Date:** March 9, 2015 at 3:37:54 PM CDT  
**To:** "Petersen, Chris" <[petersen.chris@epa.gov](mailto:petersen.chris@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Smith, Monica" <[smith.monica@epa.gov](mailto:smith.monica@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT



9636271

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Hubbard, Joseph" <[Hubbard.Joseph@epa.gov](mailto:Hubbard.Joseph@epa.gov)>  
**Date:** March 9, 2015 at 3:34:14 PM CDT  
**To:** "Crossland, Ronnie" <[Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov](mailto:Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov)>, "Enders, Jhana" <[Enders.Jhana@epa.gov](mailto:Enders.Jhana@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Durant, Jennah" <[Durant.Jennah@epa.gov](mailto:Durant.Jennah@epa.gov)>  
**Subject: RE: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT**

Hi Ronnie and Jhana,

**Can we answer these quick questions for HQ?**

Since MTBE is no longer used as additive in gasoline or other products in the U.S., an issue EPA has weighed in on over the years, will there be a special cleanup effort in the channel that would keep it closed for a longer period than with some other chemical that spilled?

Has EPA been notified? **Yes**

Sending investigators/team? What is process from here?

Is it likely just to evaporate?

He says MTBE is generally more resistant to natural biodegradation than other gasoline components. Some monitoring wells have shown little overall reduction in MTBE concentration over several years which suggests that MTBE is relatively persistent in ground water. In contrast, studies of surface water (lakes and reservoirs have shown that MTBE volatilizes evaporates) relatively quickly.

Regards,

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Joe Hubbard  
Media Relations  
Office of External Affairs, Region VI  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
OFFICE: 214-665-8476  
[hubbard.joseph@epa.gov](mailto:hubbard.joseph@epa.gov)

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**From:** McCorkhill, Michael  
**Sent:** Monday, March 09, 2015 3:23 PM  
**To:** Durant, Jennah; Hubbard, Joseph  
**Cc:** Vela, Austin; Acevedo, Janie; Assunto, Carmen  
**Subject:** FW: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT

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**From:** Crossland, Ronnie  
**Sent:** Monday, March 09, 2015 3:00 PM  
**To:** McCorkhill, Michael  
**Cc:** Smith, Monica; Petersen, Chris  
**Subject:** Re: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT

Auto correct messed it up.

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 9, 2015, at 2:55 PM, Crossland, Ronnie  
<[Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov](mailto:Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov)> wrote:

Dying

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Crossland, Ronnie"  
<[Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov](mailto:Crossland.Ronnie@epa.gov)>  
**Date:** March 9, 2015 at 2:30:22 PM CDT  
**To:** "Edlund, Carl" <[Edlund.Carl@epa.gov](mailto:Edlund.Carl@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Phillips, Pam"  
<[phillips.pam@epa.gov](mailto:phillips.pam@epa.gov)>, "Petersen, Chris"  
<[petersen.chris@epa.gov](mailto:petersen.chris@epa.gov)>, "Smith,  
Monica" <[smith.monica@epa.gov](mailto:smith.monica@epa.gov)>  
**Subject: RE: Collision in Houston Ship  
Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT**

Carl,

We are sending START to go out and do  
some air monitoring. Jhana is reaching out  
to USCG Houston for coordination.

Ronnie

-----Original Message-----

From: Crossland, Ronnie  
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2015 2:22 PM  
To: Edlund, Carl  
Cc: Phillips, Pam; Petersen, Chris; Smith, Monica  
Subject: RE: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT

Carl,

I just checked local news and they are reporting that the Houston Ship Channel is closed and there is a shelter in place for Morgan's Point.

Ronnie

-----Original Message-----

From: Crossland, Ronnie  
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2015 2:15 PM  
To: Edlund, Carl  
Cc: Phillips, Pam; Petersen, Chris; Smith, Monica  
Subject: FW: Collision in Houston Ship Channel -- RRT-6 ALERT

Carl,

This is a heads up. Apparently there has been a collision between two ships in the Houston Ship Channel. One contains MTBE. The USCG is responding and at this point they don't know how much MTBE has been released.

Thanks,  
Ronnie

-----Original Message-----

From: Sams, Michael K CIV  
[<mailto:Michael.K.Sams@uscg.mil>]  
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2015 2:09 PM  
To: Crossland, Ronnie; Smith, Monica; Mason, Steve; Greg Pollock; Richard Arnhart; Steve Buschang;  
[Karolien.Debusschere@la.gov](mailto:Karolien.Debusschere@la.gov);  
[stephen\\_spencer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:stephen_spencer@ios.doi.gov);  
[charlie.henry@noaa.gov](mailto:charlie.henry@noaa.gov); Paige Doelling - NOAA Federal; Adam Davis - NOAA Federal; [todd.m.peterson@uscg.mil](mailto:todd.m.peterson@uscg.mil);

Tyndale, Adam J CIV; Dailey, Bryan E  
CAPT  
Subject: Collision in Houston Ship Channel  
-- RRT-6 ALERT

Good Afternoon,

We just received notification from Sector Houston-Galveston about a collision near Light 86 in the upper Houston Ship Channel (Morgan Point area). The 600 ft M/V Carla Maersk was loaded with 216,000 barrels of MTBE; unknown quantity released. The 623 ft M/V Conti Peridot is a bulk carrier (steel cargo).

Initial summary follows:

- Incident occurred at 1247 CT on Mon, 9 Mar 2015
- M/V Carla Maersk reports three port cargo tanks are breeched & leaking (unknown quantity released)
- No injuries reported
- M/V Conti Peridot damage is unknown; no discharge
- Tide is falling (high tide was within last hour)
- Fog is impacting ability to conduct overflight; USCG will arrange once weather permits

USCG is in initial assessment phase. I will provide additional details once obtained.

Pls let me know if I can answer any questions. Thx!

V/r,

Mike Sams  
504-671-2234 (o)  
281-881-6193 (c)  
[Michael.K.Sams@uscg.mil](mailto:Michael.K.Sams@uscg.mil)